

AZ LINKS NEWSLETTER

www.azlinks.gov



Welcome

As you can see, we have updated our AZ Links logo and developed a new tagline: *Help starts here.* We will make the image available for partner agencies to use, and we are going to print new brochures you can use to publicize the AZ Links website.

Since the ADRC is a consortium – a network – we continue to look for ways to connect partner agencies and look for information to share. Please read the following pages to learn about news from several partners throughout Arizona.

Sincerely,

Jutta Ulrich, Arizona ADRC Project Coordinator

AHCCCS Introduces *NEW* Member-Directed Option for ALTCS Members

Submitted by Dara Johnson, AHCCCS

Member directed models or options allow members to have more control over how certain services are provided, including services like attendant care, personal care and housekeeping. The models are not a service, but rather define the way in which services are delivered. Member-directed options are available to most Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) members who live in their own home. The options are not available to members who live in an alternative residential setting or nursing facility. ALTCS members or their representatives are encouraged to contact their case manager to learn more about and consider member-directed options.

Self Directed Attendant Care (SDAC) is a member-directed option that has been available to members since 2008. Under the SDAC option, the member or member's legal guardian serves as the

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legal employer of the paid caregiver and assumes all employer-based responsibilities. The member or member's legal guardian is supported by a Fiscal Employer Agent that takes care of the taxes, payroll withholding and paychecks for the caregiver.

Agency with Choice is a new member-directed option that will be available to home-based ALTCS members beginning January 1, 2013. Under the Agency with Choice option, the provider agency and the member enter into a co-employment relationship and share employer-based responsibilities for the paid caregiver. The provider agency maintains the authority to hire and fire the caregiver and provide or arrange for the required minimum standardized training for the caregiver. The member, or their individual representative, may choose to assume one or more of the following employer-based responsibilities:

- Recruit and select caregivers, including specifying the qualifications of the caregiver over and above the standard qualifications required by AHCCCS
- Dismiss caregivers
- Manage caregivers, including determining duties and schedules

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- Supervise caregivers
- Training caregivers, including identifying special training needs

Over the course of the remainder of the year, case managers and providers will be participating in orientation and training sessions to learn more about their role in supporting members to elect and employ the Agency with Choice, member-directed option. Beginning January 2013, ALTCS members or their representatives are encouraged to contact their case manager to learn more about and consider member-directed options.

I Am in Prison

Submitted by Carol Sherer, Division of Developmental Disabilities

I am in prison, my home is my prison and I have not left my home for over 25 years. I stay in bed most of the time and look at the four walls. My mother used to take me out of bed and put me into my wheelchair but now she is too old and too fragile to do that. So I remain in prison. Once or sometimes twice a year my brother comes to town and then he helps me out of bed. The doctor comes to see me and now there is a person who comes and talks to me every couple of months. I tell her that I want to see the outside, I want a friend and that my mother cannot care for me any longer. I will miss my mother but she will not miss me as she sometimes does not even know who I am.

My brother is coming to town and he is going to meet with the person who comes to see me. He tells me that things will get better for me. The meeting is one that I don't attend because it is at the Division of Developmental Disabilities office. My brother understands that I am smart and that I

understand that my mother is ill and what goes on around me so he tells me about the meeting. The person who comes to visit me is a Support Coordinator and she is helping my brother to locate a safe place for my mother because she will not get better. Once that happens, I will also be moved somewhere. I hope I can see the outside before they put me back to bed. I tell my brother how lonely I am. He tells me it will get better.

My brother goes out to look at Dementia Units that will take my mother and that are a good place for her. My Support Coordinator works with my brother but also comes to visit me. She asks me where I want to live and what I want to do. There is hope that I may finally be released from my prison. My brother, with the help of my Support Coordinator, found a good place for my mother. They plan to move her next month. My brother is concerned because he cannot come back that soon. The Support Coordinator says he will help.

They tell me that I am next and that my brother is going to go out and look at places for me to live. He comes back all excited because he found a family who wants to take me and who has the training to deal with my Cerebral Palsy. They say I will not be in bed all the time and that I can go to a day program and meet people. I am crying. I get to move the same day my mother does. I will miss her but I will not miss my prison.

Three months later, it would have been impossible to believe that this was the same person who told us the story of her prison. She was happy, had made new friends, got to go out to eat and even to the doctors. The coordination of working with both the mother and daughter made planning possible and let reality happen.

Medicare's Extra Help

Submitted by Pat Gonzalez-Emblem

You can use the following article to provide more information to Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare's "Extra Help" program helps people with limited income to pay for their prescription medications – Many People Qualify and Don't Know it

Making ends meet should not mean going without your medications. If you have limited income and resources, Medicare's "Extra Help" program sets it up so this year you might pay no more than \$2.60 for each generic drug and \$6.50 for each brand name drug. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services estimates that more than 2 million people with Medicare may be eligible for the subsidy, but are not currently enrolled to take advantage of these savings. A recent law changed how your income and assets are counted:

Life insurance policies do not count as resources.

Any help you get from relatives, friends and others to pay for household expenses – like food, mortgage, rent, heating fuel or gas, electricity, water and property taxes – does not count as income

The changes that took place in 2010 allowed more people than ever to qualify for "Extra Help." Even if you were previously turned down for "Extra Help" due to income or resource levels, you should reapply. If you qualify, you will get help paying for Medicare

prescription drug coverage premiums, copayments, and deductibles. To qualify, you must make less than \$16,755 a year (or \$22,695 for married couples). Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get some extra help. Your resources must also be limited to \$13,070 (or \$26,120 for married couples). Resources include bank accounts, stocks, and bonds, but not your house or car.

There's no Cost or Obligation to Apply – It is easy and free to apply for "Extra Help." You or a family member, trusted counselor, or caregiver can apply online at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp> or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778). All the information you give is confidential. Medicare beneficiaries can also receive assistance in their local communities from the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) and many tribal organizations.

For local help, contact SHIP 1-800-432-4040.

Caregiver Resource Line

1-888-737-7494

www.azcaregiver.org

Come, Get Connected to Information & Resources!

Submitted by Lupita Munoz, DIRECT Center for Independence

Our Information and Referral Welcome Center shares information regarding all current DIRECT programs, services and resources available in the community for people with disabilities. Resources are explored and reviewed with individuals who may have been impacted by some barrier in their life. Our Information and Referral Specialist can help you by providing you with the right tools to help you increase and gain self-sufficiency through needed resources.

If you are a person with a disability and have questions or concerns regarding:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Financial assistance; rent/utility assistance
- Legal advocacy
- In-home care services

Assistance is available by phone or a face-to-face appointment.

Contact: Lupita Munoz at 520-624-6452 or lupitam@directilc.org for more info.

Next Statewide ADRC Partners Meeting

October 10, 2012 * 10 am – 12 noon

**Division of Aging and Adult Services
1789 W. Jefferson, Phoenix**

Newsletter Submissions

Dear AZ Link Partners,

This is your newsletter – let us know what you would like to see included.

We are especially interested in hearing about regional partners and the work they do. Please send any news or updates, special projects, activities, calendar pages, any photos or brief notices that you may want to include in the newsletter to JUlrich@azdes.gov.

Next newsletter: December 2012

Deadline for submissions: Nov. 15, 2012

I look forward to hearing from you all!

Jutta

What is Options Counseling?

The Area Agencies on Aging and the Centers for Independent Living in Maricopa and Pima County are now offering Options Counseling. This goes beyond giving consumers a list of choices or just telling them what their options are.

Options Counseling facilitates informed decision making, helping families assess their needs, ask questions, and weigh pros and cons of different long-term support options. Typically there is a face-to-face interview, and ideally the process results in an action plan that outlines next steps and helps the individual take charge of their own plan.